

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 216937

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TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 216937

LIMDIS, FOR THE AMBASSADOR FROM BELL

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PN

SUBJECT: EFFORTS TO OBTAIN EX GRATIA PAYMENT FROM PANAMA
IN THE BROWN/ROSENBAUM CASE.

REF: PANAMA 5943

1. YOU AND I DISCUSSED BY TELEPHONE YESTERDAY MORNING
(AUGUST 30) A TWO-TRACK STRATEGY FOR INTENSIFYING OUR
EFFORTS TO PERSUADE PANAMA TO INDEMNIFY MRS. ROSENBAUM
SUITABLY FOR HER TRAGIC INJURIES. FOLLOWING THROUGH AT
THIS END, I THEN BRACED AMBASSADOR GONZALEZ-REVILLA AT
LUNCH.

2. I BEGAN BY SAYING THAT THE MATTER IS OF A NATURE SUCH
THAT WE HAD CONSIDERED CALLING HIM INTO THE DEPARTMENT BUT
FOR THE TIME BEING HAD DECIDED INSTEAD TO RELY ON THE LONG-
STANDING RAPPORT BETWEEN THE NEGOTIATING TEAMS.

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 STATE 216937

3. I EXPLAINED, HOWEVER, THAT I WAS SPEAKING NOT ONLY FOR

THE UNITED STATES NEGOTIATORS BUT ALSO FOR THE DEPARTMENT AND THAT I EXPECTED HIM TO REPORT OUR CONVERSATION TO PANAMA CITY FORMALLY, FAITHFULLY, AND WITH FEELING.

4. I LISTED FOR HIM -- ONCE AGAIN -- THE REASONS WHY THE PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT HAS A CLEAR AND LARGE MORAL RESPONSIBILITY IN THE MATTER, THEN LISTED THE REASONS WHY PANAMA'S HARD, LONGER-TERM INTERESTS WOULD SURELY SUFFER IF THAT RESPONSIBILITY WERE NOT SHOULDERED. ALREADY, I SAID (WITH LITTLE EXAGGERATION), SOME MEMBERS OF THE CONGRESS FAVORABLE TO A NEW TREATY RELATIONSHIP WITH PANAMA WERE BECOMING AWARE OF AND DISMAYED AT PANAMA'S APPARENT "IRRESPONSIBILITY" IN THE MATTER. THAT AWARENESS WOULD SPREAD. MOREOVER, CONGRESSIONAL OPPONENTS OF A NEW TREATY WOULD SURELY EXPLOIT THIS AS PROOF THAT THE PRESENT PANAMANIAN GOVERNMENT IS NOT ONLY ILLEGAL AND COMMUNIST-LEANING BUT AMORAL.

5. I CONCLUDED WITH THE THOUGHT THAT ELLSWORTH, YOU AND I COULD NOT BUT BE PERSONALLY SHOCKED THAT OUR GOOD PANAMANIAN FRIENDS COULD BE SO INSENSITIVE IN THIS MATTER.

6. I ADDED THAT YOU CARRIED THE DEPARTMENT'S INSTRUCTIONS TO RAISE THE MATTER IN PANAMA AGAIN AT ONCE. (I REFRAINED FROM MENTIONING, AS YOU AND I HAD AGREED, THAT YOUR FUTURE EFFORTS, LIKE YOUR PAST ONES, WOULD BE DIRECTED TO PRESIDENT LAKAS ON A MOST PERSONAL AND CONFIDENTIAL BASIS.)

7. GONZALEZ-REVILLA TOOK THIS WELL ENOUGH AND SAID HE WOULD REPORT TO FOREIGN MINISTER BOYD. I REMINDED HIM THAT BOYD HAD LITTLE IF ANY BACKGROUND ON THE MATTER.

8. HE TRIED HARD TO GET ME TO SAY "HOW MUCH IT WOULD TAKE" TO MAKE SUITABLE FINANCIAL AMENDS. OF COURSE I REFUSED, BUT COMMENTED THAT HIS EMBASSY HERE COULD EASILY ASCERTAIN, AT THE VERY LEAST, THE MEDICAL COSTS INVOLVED IN THE PAST AND PROSPECTIVELY.
CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 216937

9. HE ALSO SAID THAT HE AND HIS GOVERNMENT HAVE THE FEELING OF BEING "HIGH-PRESSURED" AND "BLACKMAILED" BY THE LAWYERS AND CONSULTANTS OPERATING ON BEHALF OF THE ROSENBAUMS. I REPLIED THAT HE WAS NOT TALKING TO LAWYERS OR CONSULTANTS NOW.

10. WILL HOPE TO HEAR SOON WHAT LUCK YOU HAVE HAD AT

YOUR END. ROBINSON

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